



Fertile Heart

An introduction to A Fertile Heart for Head Teachers

This introduction is for Head Teachers, Senior Management Teams, Diocesan Education Advisers and all who need all the relevant information to discern which RHSE curriculum to use in their school(s).

It is offered in conjunction with the introductions to parents * and, particularly to teachers *, and it seeks to underpin and build on these.

Assurance of Authenticity

Choosing an RSHE curriculum for a school is a sensitive, and potentially fraught, undertaking. So is writing one. We have consistently thought we had something to offer schools with such a curriculum, but have always been very aware of our need to consult widely, and be enriched by many sources. From the very start, we have consistently communicated our intentions, then our process and resources to the CES for feedback. We have also been in touch with every diocesan ordinary and DES. Furthermore, we have sought advice from many teachers and had our modules piloted in several schools, since which *A Fertile Heart* has been taught in Cardiff Archdiocesan schools for over three years now - leading to vital feedback, which continues to shape our course.

Most importantly, Birmingham Archdiocese engaged in a thorough, robust assessment of *A Fertile Heart* for over two years. The *Censor Deputatis*, as they are called, was Fr Jonathan Veasey, who has had decades of experience of Catholic education at all levels, not least with the CES. At the end of this process we received both the *Nihil Obstat* from Fr Veasey and the Imprimatur from Archbishop Bernard Longley. We think such ecclesial recognition and approval is important.

The CES were helpful in providing a detailed list of topics to be covered in line with statutory DfE guidance. We fulfil these, except for dealing with science - particularly human reproductive biology. This is deliberate. Primary schools already exercise their own discretion regarding what and when their pupils are taught about puberty and human reproduction. Secondary schools cover such subjects in human biology. This should allow reproductive biology to be taught discretely, and by specialised teachers - both of which we think is best. We do offer some safeguarding lessons in primary school, but they are offered merely as a bridge between our faith and the good work you will already do. We do acknowledge that we don't address dealing with loss enough, and will look to rectify that in the near future.

Sensitive Contemporary Subjects

There are some subjects which are, rightly, particularly sensitive in our culture. Statutory guidance calls us to help our primary school children understand that there are a variety of family units in our society, and to be tolerant of all persons whatever their situation - respecting the dignity of all. This is completely in keeping with Catholic ethos, and is traditionally a great strength of our schools. The statutory guidance calls for secondary schools to further draw out the life choices available to all, and their legal protection. Again we do this. Faith schools can do this within their anthropological vision - which we do. Thus, we deal very little with LGBT explicitly. We do very much deal with tolerance, dignity and respect (e.g. 5f, 5g, 6f, 7c specifically on tolerance, 7k, 8g, 9g, 10g, 11j that include dignity and respect). We also deal with practical issues such as bullying, texting and sexting (8k, g and i respectively) and how these can sadly focus on sexual impulses and orientation. We do all this within the fundamental framework of personhood and the importance of relationship, based on us all being made in the image of God, all called to interdependence, and called to help, not hinder, each other on our journey to fulfilment in self-gift. We deal a lot with appropriate vulnerability (e.g. 7g), which is central to relationship and is the antithesis of intolerance, prejudice and destructive discrimination.

A positive Christian vision marriage is specifically promoted in 5d and 9f, and in the latter cohabitation is also mentioned in this context. We mention LGBT in 9h, but it is important to stress that the module is not about this, but on growing through any sexual confusion experienced during adolescence - which surely is common to every journey into maturity. LGBT orientations in adults who have reached emotional and psychological maturity is very different to the internal confusion experienced by adolescence in a myriad of different ways, as they grow. We think this second issue is much more relevant to teenagers, and helping them understand the difference is very helpful, too. 10b and 10d continue to gently help anyone experiencing same sex attraction to feel accepted as they are, as a person (it is also initially introduced in 8h), and to have patience and confidence in journeying to maturity, knowing that they are beautiful (10a) and loved, especially by God (10c).

There are three important dimensions to any life-giving relationship: equality, complementarity and the nuance of what that complementarity is. This third dimension is important, but only in the context of the first two. People find it almost impossible to believe that any complementarity doesn't demean equality - right from Adam and Eve thinking that trusting God prevented them from being equal to him. We find it very hard to believe an initiator won't be a controller, and a receiver-responder isn't thereby demeaned. *A Fertile Heart's* model of initiator and receiver-responder is a way of thinking through the nuance of what complementarity is, and only makes sense within a loving communion of persons. It is primarily about our relationship with God, but is reflected in many different aspects of life - within relationships and even within each of us. We do talk about the complementarity within marriage, but even when mentioned as early as Module 6c, we distinguish this from other relationships. In later modules (9f, 11a) we speak of the complementarity of marriage, and suggest that there is something masculine about initiating the romantic relationship (Juliet calling up to Romeo's balcony wouldn't quite have the same effect on us), and something feminine about initiating in parenthood (10d - mainly as discussion points); we speak of the complementarity of motherhood and fatherhood too (10h). We also use Pope St John Paul II's sense that masculinity complements femininity in the way the persons desires to love and be loved (8g, 10d). All this is proportionate to a whole course on RHSE, and consonant with the Bible, Church teaching and Pope Francis' articulation of it. It will be misunderstood if judgement is made without reading what we actually say.

The Fertility of Christian Anthropology

A student very rarely underachieves because they simply didn't attend sufficient lessons. Education is about quality more than quantity, and that very much includes the quality of a student's engagement. A common reason for a student's disengagement with education is the inner turmoil and confusion within them, compounded by a resultant sense of being ugly, irrelevant and unloved. In such a student, to a greater or lesser degree, the natural youthful capacity to dream, bounce back and thrive is eroded by a spiritual malaise that deprives them of hope and stifles growth. This is not meant to suggest a bleak summary of school life, but the experience of most of us is that a school's energies can be increasingly used up in getting to a point of education, rather than in the education itself.

A factor in any lowered ability to overcome this issue that Catholic school may experience is the loss of a united vision of the human person. This is not to say we do not have any united vision, but neither are we immune from the sterile spirit of individualism and consumerism that disintegrates persons, families and communities. *A Fertile Heart* is offered as part of the remedy. It probably won't be easy to get every teacher on board, but by providing the modules so comprehensively we seek to help you engage them - and an engaged staff teaching *A Fertile Heart* will be a more united staff. In turn, what they teach will help pupils know they are loved, beautiful and bursting with potential. The self-understanding they will gain will energise them to receive more fully from you so that they can respond ever more fully. In short, implementing any RHSE course will take time and effort, but implementing *A Fertile Heart* will repay that effort with helping to create a more united, fertile school environment. Christ's truth is amazing, and we have been told to confine it to RE, and otherwise keep it quiet, safe or private, for too long.

Modules 8c and d contain a hidden depth relevant to education. In our intellectual growth, there is ordering and there is insight. Computers reveal the power of ordering - offering so much technology by 'simply' communicating a series 1s and 0s in the right order. But insight is an intellectual sharing in God's creativity. No teacher took up their vocation so as to better order information; we took it up for those moments when we facilitate a young person's moment of insight, when suddenly a new depth of understanding is reached. So much imposed on us nowadays is about ordering - be it lesson plans, information to impart for exam passing, or ensuring that every decision made is documented in the name of accountability. And its sterility is sapping. What we are called to is a cooperation in God's creativity. *A Fertile Heart* enriches a school's capacity to be a more fertile ground for insight.

So, we realise we are not hiding our light under a bushel when we claim that *A Fertile Heart* can help reintegrate and further energise your school, but neither are we lying. A family united in a clear, common, loving vision is one where its children thrive. A school community is the same.

Inclusivity

An old African Proverb says, 'If you want to journey fast, go alone; if you want to journey far, go together'. This is an important reminder to us regarding the need to work together. Parents have the prime responsibility to educate their children, but it often falls to the school and the teacher to provide the impetus and knowledge needed. We hope *A Fertile Heart* facilitates this, but we are only the vehicle. Obviously, the more parents can be included in RHSE, the better - including consultation before implementation of an RHSE course and appropriate updates along the way. Perhaps, it is even more important to encourage their engagement in the actual process of education their child in RHSE. Some activities in the modules are specifically for home, but many more can be used to include family - not least asking for whatever discussion topic has most engaged the class to be taken back home, with the pupils later asked to feedback to the class. We have had some interesting developments fed back to us by this simple tool.

Some subjects raised in *A Fertile Heart* would benefit from being linked to communicating appropriate school policies and positions and even legal standing: such as bullying, protected characteristics, and safeguarding procedures. We try to flag these up in the PowerPoints at appropriate times. In secondary school, other negative issues regarding abuse, violence, manipulation etc. are dealt with more in the teacher notes of the PowerPoints than in the pupil booklets - giving the teacher more discretion in how and when to raise such issues. Hopefully *A Fertile Heart* allows all these subjects to be sensitively dealt with, importantly, in a positive context.

We are very thoughtful regarding what and how we communicate, particularly about marriage, sexuality, and family life. However, sensitive subjects in particular, whether rightly heard or misheard, can set off (not cause) issues within the young person. Therefore it is imperative that the school's pastoral care team is closely included in the whole process, including them knowing when various sensitive issues are being raised, and what is actually being said - thereby allowing them to be better prepared. Pupils seeking out pastoral support after a subject is raised is not a negative thing in itself - often it is exactly the opposite and shows that the module has drawn out something that was already within the pupil, and has given them the confidence and even the language, to express it. One to one compassion and authentic guidance will always be a necessary ingredient of accompaniment, and of authentic RHSE. We have found that *A Fertile Heart* is accessible to SEND students. Although the course maintains a high academic standard, experience has shown that all pupils across the spectrum have been able to join in with the discussions and been enlivened by them.

Implementation

A Fertile Heart is a robust, integrated curriculum which explores personhood, relationship and sexuality through encouraging and enabling each pupil to reflect on their own experience, with academic rigour. This is not normally tried. Too often we have left this most important of subjects to anecdotal communication leading to over-subjective discussion, and a focus on the practical rather than the deeper human reality.

The coherent anthropology that *A Fertile Heart* offers is a great strength. Unfortunately, a side-effect is that it isn't easy to start off 'half-way through'. It has been written so that although the primary modules are an excellent foundation for the secondary school ones, the secondary school curriculum can stand alone. Nevertheless, starting off at, say, 10a for Y10 students is starting off at lesson 34 of a 53 lesson secondary school course. Any course that truly educates is going to suffer from that.

We were aware of this issue before the curriculum was used in schools, and experience has borne it out. Despite various attempts, Y10 in particular, because it deals with sensitive sexual subjects more than any other year, suffers from being taught from a standing start. A solution we suggest will probably sound strange at first - due to the importance of age appropriate education - but actually has much merit. We recommend that, for the first year of implementation only, you consider each year starting with earlier modules from the curriculum - even to the extent of starting from the beginning.

Teaching and learning this subject, with the intellectual robustness it deserves, are no mean feats, and will both benefit from a graduated implementation, rather than a 'vertical take-off'. Because there are only 11/10 modules each year, actually the whole course could be delivered in two years. Thus, every year except Y11 could receive the whole course. This is not the ideal, but we are dealing with how to immediately implement a curriculum across the whole school - and so no solution will be ideal.

Pupils who would feel patronised deliberately being given lessons years below their maturity level, can actually find it quite appealing if they realise the reason for it. Likewise, getting teachers on board with any RHSE curriculum, on top of their own subject, presents problems. So, commencing each year, and therefore each teacher, with 7a, gives them all time to adjust to the new curriculum, language and set-up. We have had much more positive feedback from teachers who have had such opportunity, whereas the most negative feedback has come from non-Christian, non-specialist teachers suddenly being asked to teach Y10 modules that have 'suddenly been thrust upon them'. If every teacher offering *A Fertile Heart* is starting at the same point, then there will also be more 'go-to' teachers for less confident ones to approach, who will be at the same stage. (One school benefitted from appointing one RE teacher to each year of RHSE so that the other teachers could be helped by them, but the way suggested here actually provides for a bigger pool of good advice.)

With minimal creativity, teachers can adapt activities to be age appropriate, and discussions will clearly be at the level of the pupils. For a subject in which teachers and pupils alike can find it particularly hard to admit ignorance, 'having to' start from 'lower down' can actually be quite empowering. Many priests get told by parents that they loved their children's homily because they understood and followed it, whereas if the priest had pitched it at that level with only adults present, everyone would have felt awkward. This is only a suggestion, but one based on experience and much reflection.

Highlighted Modules

The appendix gives a summary of *A Fertile Heart's* curriculum. It is offered to inform you - as the truth is often in the detail - and to communicate the coherence and intentional progression of the course. However, even a summary of 115 modules is long. If you are not going to read all of the following, we do recommend that you read briefly about modules 1f, 2f, 5k, 6h, 6i-k, 9d, 9h, 9i-k, 10d, 10g, 10h and 11h. We are very happy with how we have communicated truth sensitively. However, people often need to ask questions about particularly sensitive modules, in order to be reassured, and it is good for you to be informed beforehand.

Conclusion

A Fertile Heart has much to offer your school in offering an RSHE curriculum in an integrated, life-giving way. The appendix, and particularly the 'Theology of *A Fertile Heart*' document are long and deep. There can easily be a feeling that something founded on deep theology will be over-academic and hard to teach. However, as the course points out, emotions are not good guides. Accurate, deep theology allows for clearer, more nuanced, education - and should actually lead to simpler truths. For instance we challenge anyone to come up with more accurate, simpler definitions than those in our glossary at the front of each book - on person, freedom, tolerance, nature, justice and joy. Such deep theology also allows for the right subjects to be covered, and in the right order.

We have tried to address, here, the relevant issues connected with choosing and implementing an RHSE course. However, please don't hesitate to contact us for any further information.*

Appendix

Overview of Curriculum and of Each Year

As mentioned, an in-depth theological explanation of the foundations of *A Fertile Heart* is available (*The Theology of *A Fertile Heart*). This appendix gives a brief overview of the years of the curriculum. In so doing it also highlights any modules of which it would be particularly beneficial to inform you. Not surprisingly, more is said of the later years when sexuality is introduced.

The whole curriculum is based on the deep desire within any child to grow, help others and make a difference. This is in complete harmony with God's command to us to "Be fertile!" or "Be fruitful!" (Gen. 1:28). The whole of the Old Testament understands this call in terms of babies and crops (cf. Dt. 30:15-18) - a physical fertility and prosperity. This is hardly surprising without the revelation of Christ, and in a time when survival was not assured. Even then, such fertility was to be achieved through faithfulness to God in love, in reciprocal complementarity: "I shall take you to be my people and I will be your God" (Ex. 6:7). This central vision of the Old Testament also highlights that we are fruitful together, as a people, not primarily as individuals. Jesus deepens this vision to one of spiritual fertility, inviting us to cooperate in building the kingdom of God. This kingdom involves a new heaven and a new earth, and the link between this creation and the new one is every created person. Therefore, helping every created person grow is at the heart of building the kingdom and of spiritual fertility. Jesus reveals that the heart of all spiritual fertility is love: "love one another, just as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

Jesus' example of loving us is a reciprocal complementary love, reflecting the reciprocal complementary love he shares with the Father. Marriage uniquely reflects this love, and the love Christ has for his Church, but also uniquely reveals the spiritual fertility of every authentic reciprocal complementarity - either between persons or within the person.

This is a uniquely life-giving vision, as not all of us are able or called to be biologically fertile, but we are all called to be spiritually fertile. This vision at the heart of *A Fertile Heart* is life-giving to everyone, and helps remove any sense of uselessness and unimportance in all - an all too common dis-ability in many people today, maybe especially young people. This is one reason why we opted for the word 'fertile' rather than 'fruitful': because the main battle in our culture is between an isolating, sterile vision and an integrating, fertile one. The other is that it helps integrate biological fertility into the whole fertility of the person - which is the right setting to understand it, whereas our culture increasingly isolates biological fertility from all other human activity, leaving it isolated, meaningless and unwelcome - more likely to get in the way of life rather than enhance it.

Reception

In Reception, we start simply with the creation stories of Genesis, which founds the whole curriculum on the truth that we are all made, as man and woman, in the image of God (Gen. 1:26) - a positive and universally life-giving truth, accessible to all. Then, using the parable of the mustard seed, the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus call for us to trust in God's providence by learning from the lilies of the valley and the birds of the air (Mt. 6:24-33), the story of Noah, and hopefully by planting seeds, the children are gradually introduced to the joy of growth, and cooperating in it - by loving God, oneself and each other. God feeds our body, mind and heart, and we are called to help – for ourselves and each other.

In all but 2 of the 18 modules for Reception, Y1 and Y2 (6 modules of 3 lessons for each year), the Bible story is backed up by a contemporary story - as well as by various activities, songs and simple discussions.

Year 1

Year 1 continues with this basic structure, but is also given unity by the Hail Mary. The Annunciation, and the parable of the Good Shepherd, deepen the children's understanding of God's personal love for them, encouraging them both to see their gifts as an expression of that love, and to give him thanks by courageously using them to help others.

The Visitation, and the story of Zacchaeus, help the children see that being loved by God helps us love ourselves, and both of these help us love each other, with God's love. We think through the many people who help them grow, and the small ways they can help others.

The parable of the Prodigal Son helps the children see the whole of humanity as God's forgiven family, encouraging them to forgiveness, and to love everyone as brothers and sisters in Jesus. Finally, the Last Supper and the Mass help the children understand that they are on a journey from now to heaven - a journey we are all on together. All this helps them grow in relationship, and is backed up by contemporary stories, songs, prayer and diverse activities. In the context of '...now and at the hour of our death. Amen', lesson 1f1 broaches, in a gentle way, the subject of death as leading to meeting Jesus face-to-face, and heaven.



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Year 2

Year 2 again continues with the same structure, but this time it is given unity by the Our Father, which firstly helps the children to understand their journey from earth to heaven. The story of Adam and Eve teaches them about our turning away from God, and Jesus's saving us in love. The Good Samaritan teaches them the importance of service. Jesus' Calming of the Storm helps them trust in God when it is hard. The parable of the Talents helps them see that God gives us what we need, when we need it, and encourages them to help God feed themselves and others in body, mind and heart. The Unforgiving Servant helps them understand the importance of having a forgiving heart. And the story of Joseph and his brothers helps them be led away from temptation, and to help God keep them safe - by being kind but careful. All this helps them grow in relationship, and is backed up by contemporary stories, songs, prayer and diverse activities. Lesson 2f1 mentions the devil, as the snake who tempts us, and lesson 2f2 is our main KS1 lesson on safeguarding, hopefully complementing what you already teach the children and linking it to our faith.

Year 3

The 11 modules of Year 3 focus on different passages of John's Gospel to help the children understand the importance of relationship and of understanding what is at the heart of receiving and giving love. The central message is that we need to be open and 'spiritually facing the other person' to receive, and facing the other person and willing to 'move towards' them, in order to give (3a). This is particularly true in our relationship with God, and it is Jesus, as our light and living water, who is central to our growth (3b & c). The wedding at Cana applies some of this to marriage and all relationships (3d). We then look at Baptism and St John the Baptists call to 'decrease so that he can increase' (3e, cf. Jn. 3:30) - as a call to be selfless, and how the raising of Lazarus calls us to trust in God on this journey of love (3f). The parable of the vine (Jn. 15) is the ideal vision for communicating all this, including the importance of remaining (3h), the need to be pruned by God (3i), the help the Mass and Mary give us (3j) and of joyfully keeping God's commandments (3k) - and alongside Jn. 12:24 (3g), about a single grain dying - also links well with First Holy Communion preparation (as the focus on forgiveness in Y2 is similarly a good aid in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation whether this occurs in Y2 or 3). All these years focus very much on Bible stories to educate and inspire the children.

Year 4

In Year 4 there is a sea change when we start the gradual 8-year process of helping the children reflect on, and own, the truth Christ gives us. Thus, there is more reliance on reason, which then increases in KS3. To complement this a prayer session is introduced into modules from 4e to 6k, helping ensure that reason complements faith, rather than replaces it - and keeping the curriculum rooted in reality and especially in relationship with God, rather than it becoming a dry academic subject.

As said, Y4 begins with us being made in the image of God (4a). Greek philosophy and Catholic theology both explored the human condition through starting with happiness - and who are we to disagree? So pleasure and joy - or physical and spiritual happiness - are explored (4b), together with what influences our choices (4c & d). The simple model of receiving God's love and responding to it (initiator and receiver & responder) is introduced in 4e, which allows us to understand obedience to God in a healthy way (4f). We then explore life cycles and life spirals (4g) which helps the children see the unity of all growth. Being loved allows the children to admit they have impulses within themselves that aren't life-giving, but that don't stop them being loveable (4h). Jesus saves us, and helps us to grow to the fullness of life (Jn. 10:10 - 4i), and we explore how he uniquely does that through the Church, the Mass and the Sacraments (4j and k - these are the only modules where alternatives are offered for non-Catholic schools, as they are the only ones in the whole curriculum that deal with specifically Catholic practices).

Year 5

Year 5 deepens the children's appreciation of the centrality of relationship in all creation, but particularly between persons (5a and c), and also of the need for each of us to continually grow in self-understanding, so that we can help form who we are, and find happiness in self-gift (5b). This healthily unites self-development and love - which otherwise can be seen as being polarised: self-development empowers us to love more; love empowers us to grow and develop more. This integrating of self-development and loving relationship is key to healthy RHSE. Individualism prioritises self-development, leading to situation where such development and being loving seem to clash - not least between career and family. (It also means development by self, rather than of self, by God and me and others.) By articulating the one process of self-knowledge, self-governance, self-possession and self-gift, Catholic personalism is uniquely able to harmonise these two dimensions, hopefully restoring the harmony of family and work. Obviously, this is all only begun, not achieved, in Y5!

This vision leads to reflecting on marriage, especially the way it helps children and spouses to grow (5d). In turn, this takes us to the crucial exploration of what freedom is (5e&f), and therefore what tolerance is (5g&h). Understanding freedom as the freedom to grow in truth and love, allows us to see commitment as strengthening our freedom, not replacing it. Opposed to this is the emotional tendency to see freedom as the ability to do what I like. This is the central difference between the understanding of our Church and our culture: every other disagreement stems from that one - both historically and philosophically. Tolerance is respecting the other's freedom, so obviously, if we misunderstand freedom we will misunderstand tolerance. Getting these right at an early age is key to empowering our children's growth.

The year finishes with an exploration of the rationality of believing in God (5i), and of impulses with us, and influences from others, both of which we need to understand and manage (5j and k). 5k does raise the issue of evil spirits tempting us. This is important - and is done sensitively and unsensationally. It is done very much in the setting of Jesus, Mary, the angels and saints, and particularly each child's guardian angel. If anything it demythologises the devil etc., empowering the children to spot his temptations, be protected from any glamour such subjects can present, and remain focused on God.



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Year 6

Year 6 develops the children's understanding that there is both a given-ness to, and an ability to cooperate in, who we are - nature and personhood - which includes consent and choice (6a & b). 6c presents the whole of creation in an exciting way - of 'spiritual fractals'! 6f further develops the children's understanding of tolerance; and 6g helps them reflect on how they can easily let anyone they admire, including media stars, affect who they become. 6h deals with the sensitive issues of what can go wrong in relationships with people in power over them, helping them nurture their 'internal alarm bells' so that they can be 'Safe but not Scared'. More than any other module, it will need coordination between SLT, the Y6 teacher and the pastoral care team.

To fully grow intellectually, our children need faith, reason and time and space to reflect. 6e deals with the importance of being and stillness. A major theme of *A Fertile Heart* is the complementarity of faith and reason. Without this understanding, many children make a choice to reject faith 'in favour' of science - and relegate their religion to superstition and/or irrelevancy - obviously impairing the development of their relationship with God, which is at the heart of their self-realisation. Thus, it is important, while still at primary school that the children are helped to understand the rationality of knowing God exists (6d, following on from 5i). Also, the whole year is completed with a three module 'series' on faith and science (6i-k). Too many children stop the fruitful process of engagement with life through faith and reason, through buying into erroneous clichés like, 'I believe in science/the Big Bang/evolution, not God'. These 3 modules offer a simple, interesting and powerful way through the fallacies of such arguments, and help them to see the true dynamic complementarity of religion and science. Hopefully this will empower our children to stay strong in their commitment to develop through both faith and reason.

Year 7

Year 4 gave the building blocks for Years 5 and 6 to use in reflecting on self-development and on loving relationship. The start of Year 7 will offer these same building blocks for the rest of the curriculum to use. Therefore, the first five modules offer either an important refresher for those who did *A Fertile Heart* in primary school, or a chance to catch up, for those who didn't. Thus, being human (7a); the importance of, and connection between, freedom, truth and love (7b); tolerance (7c); person and nature (7d) and the rational knowledge of God's existence (7e) are all covered.

As said regarding Year 5, for healthy, life-giving RHSE, both self-development and loving relationship need to be explored and integrated. Individualism prioritises self-development, leading to situations where such development and being loving seem to clash - not least between career and family. Catholic personalism is uniquely able to harmonise these two dimensions in complementarity - love is the best impetus for self-development, and self-development empowers us to love more authentically.

The second half of Y7 focuses on loving relationship, starting with the centrality of my relationship with God in my growth. Firstly, 7f encourages the pupils to realise that nature and nurture are both important, but that maturity is founded on allowing God to be the biggest influence on me, and myself to be the second. This understanding is a foundation for appropriate vulnerability (7g). This is a central concept of *A Fertile Heart*, and indeed of being human. Without it we either remain isolated or are too vulnerable to getting hurt. The last four modules applies this understanding of appropriate vulnerability to the pupil's relationship with God (7h); parents and authority (7i); themselves (7j); and friends (7k).

Throughout the secondary school, inappropriate and destructive attitudes, as well as things that can go wrong in relationships and the resultant damage, will be sensitively communicated to the pupils, but such negative issues are hopefully always situated in a positive context, so as to not cause panic, but instead empower the young persons to constructively deal with them when necessary - obviously including seeking appropriate help.

Year 8

In Year 8 we focus more explicitly on how to develop into a truly spiritually fertile person, and how this is connected with relationship (8a). The rest of the first half of Y8 looks at the three central choices in self-development that enable us to become spiritually fertile. Being, intellect and will are three important dimensions of personhood. To start with, I am much more aware of me, and my experiences and thoughts, so a child's natural focus is on the physical, on their impulses and on them. Maturity, and thus spiritual fertility, involves gradually choosing the spiritual over the physical (8b), truth over my opinions (8c & d) and love over ego-life (8e). The summary of 8e is an important benchmark, clarifying that appropriate vulnerability, and choosing the spiritual, truth and love are key to growing in our ability to relate, grow and be fertile. 8f then deals with vocation, and the specific call each of us has to live out this fruitful life, within these universal call to growth.

The second half of Y8 deals with attraction, but also with possible barriers to growth. Two modules deal with more general things: 8h helps the pupils to better understand fascination with the other, particularly with the opposite sex - and focuses it on fascination with the person, rather than being overly physical. 8j deals with the important need to understand our temptation to fear and control - and the importance of hope and faith, respectively, to overcome them. 8g, i and k, as mentioned earlier, deal with the more concrete topics of texting, sexting and bullying.

Year 9

In Year 9 we begin with an articulation of self-development culminating in self-gift (9a). Then we explore the coherent, gradual journey, of getting in touch with our 'inner life' and how, using faith, reason and time for reflection, our intellect, will and emotions can become ever more integrated. It is this that gives us true and lasting happiness - joy - as joy, simply, is shared life, shared being - which is at the heart of relationship and fertility. 9a introduces the process of self-knowledge, self-governance and self-possession which only bears fruit if it leads to self-gift. Maturity includes our self-understanding being ever more formed by truth. There is reality, there is my experience of reality, including my self-experience, and there is my perception of reality, including my self-perception. Reality is true; my experience is valid because it is mine; my perception might be imperfect or even wrong - in fact it is quite likely to be, especially as I begin my journey into personhood. The inability to differentiate between my experience of myself and my perception, or understanding, of myself, is at the heart of much damage in our culture. My experience is de facto valid, as it is my experience. But that doesn't mean my interpretation or understanding of it is true. Without this distinction, my understanding of myself becomes de facto true - leading to all sorts of disintegration and sterility.

Faith, reason and conscience speak to the mind, encouraging the person's self-perception to conform to truth. Emotions speak to the heart encouraging one to seek to conform truth to one's self-perception. Thus, an important part of maturing is choosing to allow faith, reason and conscience to inform our emotions so that they move us in the right direction. Faith and reason give direction; will and emotions give movement - so we need truth to give us the right direction, and love (an act of the will) to be backed up by our emotions - inner turmoil and confusion happen when will and emotions impel us in different directions - as we all know!

9b helps the pupils, through reason and faith, to know their deepest desires. 9c helps them reflect on themselves to find these deepest desires within. 9d deals with the difficulty of discovering dis-ordered desires with me. 'Disorder' is an important word to understand. Emotionally, in our culture it is often heard as saying there is something wrong with the person - in a judgemental, condemning sense. The Church uses it to express something that is not properly ordered, and/or leads to disharmony. We try and defuse the emotional reaction by putting the word in quotation marks and/or using the hyphen in it. Surely we all have impulses in us that make us too quick to impatience, anger, lying, making personal judgements or something similar? These come out of a wrong ordering within us of what is important, and can lead to a disordering of our lives - they are destructive if they hold sway. As the old hymn asks, 'and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace'. So, 9d seeks to help the pupils acknowledge dis-ordered desires within themselves - while still knowing they are loved - and so gradually learn how to better understand the desires and respond to them in creative ways. Sadly, our culture is often intolerant of any suggestion that persons have disordered desires and impulses, and this is doubly true in reference to sexuality. That's why we reflect on disorder first, before turning to sexuality.

In 9e we start to try and apply all we have learnt about growing as a person in general, to growing in our sexuality. This leads to 9f which reflects on how marriage is a uniquely powerful setting for growing as a person, and in spiritual and physical fertility. It is an important module for showing that self-development allows for loving commitment, and loving commitment helps self-development.

We then return to the importance of knowing we are all beautiful (9g) but primarily in regard to personal beauty, not physical beauty. This is helpful in us then dealing more explicitly with the confusion that normally arises in the adolescent as their sexuality emerges, in 9h. As said earlier, this is absolutely different from the orientation a mature, integrated adult experiences, but it would be naïve to think that no pupil, or parent, teacher or outsider will hear it as such (cf. p.2 above also).

Separating self-development from love separates work from family - breaking the original unity of Genesis 1:28: "Be fertile! Multiply, fill the earth and subdue it". Such a separation is closely linked to a wrong attitude to money. Therefore, the final three modules are a mini-series on fertility and economics (9i-k). Jesus warns us very severely about love of money (Mt. 6:24), because it is the practical expression of our desire to control, rather than trust God and his love - it focuses on self-development (at best), isolated from love and appropriate vulnerability. It is not coincidence that the dominance of individualism has coincided with the dominance of a liberal capitalism that sees money as fertile - and work, and therefore persons, as sterile. Instead, understanding money as something that should aid exchange and cooperation aids human fertility, as any tool does.

Year 10

Year 10 is the one that most explicitly deals with sexuality. As such, it is important to reaffirm, at the start, the beauty of each student (10a). 10b deals with a subject that has been dealt with in many modules previously, but now is looked at in its own right: the objective and subjective. This is connected with nature and personhood; given-ness and growth; truth and perception; reason and emotions. These pairs need to be integrated, but objectivity has to shape the subjective, as truth shapes perception. The stronger the emotion, the more we are tempted to discard the objective or conform it to the subjective, but emotions help us experience ourselves, and upon reflection, understand ourselves. They are not good guides.

10c deals with the importance of stillness in getting in touch with our deeper desires, owning them, and gradually understanding them. It also deals with panic - a common reaction connected with self-discovery, which prevents stillness and rational reflection. 10d reflects on the beauty of reciprocal complementarity between masculinity and femininity which steers a life-giving way between sterile stereotyping and uniformity. The Church is clear that there is a call to unity between man and woman, and that there is a life-giving complementarity between them - physically and spiritually (CCC 2333)¹. She is still striving to fully articulate that reciprocal complementarity.

10e is a meditation on the intimate link between the loving communion of persons and fertility, uniquely expressed in marriage. 10f helps the students see that chastity is both the way of offering one's gift of fertility back to God in love, and the way of ensuring it remains a vehicle of love, and not lust, in self-gift to one's spouse. 10g reflects on the adolescent's vital journey of discovering, understanding and owning their own fertility. It recommends caution regarding the Pill being given to teenage girls, and the accidental but real side-effects of this - not least the stifling of this process of discovery. This module is not primarily about artificial contraception; it principally refers to the Pill in the context of its effect on the adolescent female's inner journey of discovery. However, it is probably the most counter-cultural of all the modules, and may encounter resistance from some staff. 10h is probably the most biological of all the modules, reflecting on the biological/physiological differences between men and women and the effects oxytocin and vasopressin seem to have on sexual bonding. Its primary message is that, like emotions, we have to understand our biology and our hormones, so that we can make wiser choices in cooperating in our growth. The year finishes with two modules on two other types fertility: the fertility of suffering that is central to Christianity (10i) and the social fertility of working together (10j).

Modules 10d, 10g and 10h have recourse to science as part of their message. A document collating scientific papers and other writings that authenticate this science is available: *

¹"Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out."

Year 11

Year 11 starts off with a recap on our call to be fertile persons, primarily in the spiritual sense, but often, in the biological sense too. That fertility is our participation in the creativity of God (11a). Through the next six modules, we then return to self-development, by reflecting on what Greek philosophy and Christian theology name as the seven virtues. This begins with the three intellectual ones of knowledge (intellect), wisdom and understanding (11b) - and looks at the temptation to rationalise, instead of think - which is when our emotions lead us to decide what we want and then concoct a rationale for justifying our position. 11c and 11d deal with prudence - practically applying the wisdom and understanding we have gained. This is explored through looking at five relevant questions to young adult life. Justice (11e) is applying understanding to our will, to our desire to do good. Temperance (11f) is applying understanding to our impulses to live, grow and give life. Fortitude (11g) is applying understanding to our fear of death, isolation and annihilation.

We then return to the self-giving nature of the sexual act and an exploration of the amazing dignity we have in being able (normally) to share in the creation of a new human person (11h). This module focuses on St Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. Although this encyclical has been largely rejected by the world, there is nothing in this module that is not consonant with reason and with every other module of the course. It is a joyful invitation to own the Church's beautiful culture of fertility, over an individualist culture of sterility. We then finish the whole course with a module on the fertility of stewardship (11i), and, perhaps most importantly of all, the fertility of mercy (11j).

This has been quite an extensive journey through the whole curriculum, but we thought it was important to make available to you the coherence and integrity of the course. Of course, for all the articulation of Christ's vision in *A Fertile Heart*, it remains a curriculum - words. To truly understand *A Fertile Heart*, we need to turn in openness and love to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in which the reality of all we speak of is found.